

Surveyors to Mark Charles Mason's Grave in Philadelphia . . . with Real Mason-Dixon Stone

Land surveyors, astronomers and history buffs from all across America, England and as far away as Australia will gather at Philadelphia this summer, to mark the nearly-forgotten grave of renowned early surveyor & astronomer **Charles Mason**.

It was Mason who teamed with English colleague **Jeremiah Dixon** in the **1760s** to lay out the famed **Mason-Dixon Line**, a colonial boundary that settled long disputes between Maryland, Pennsylvania and Delaware. Decades later, after Pennsylvania outlawed slavery, their line became the quasi-legal division between slave states and free, in pre-Civil War America.

On **August 31, 2013**, in a ceremony open to the public, **Charles Mason's burial place** will receive its first-ever grave marker --- **226 years** after his death --- in the form of an *authentic 1766 Mason-Dixon Stone*, from the historic line the two Englishmen themselves placed upon the earth.

Mason died in **1786** and was laid to rest at **Christ Church Burial Ground**, in the shadow of Philadelphia's **Independence Hall**. His old friend **Benjamin Franklin** paid for the funeral --- but Ben was too thrifty to include a tombstone. As a result, Charles Mason's grave has remained *unmarked* for more than two centuries . . . an oversight finally to be corrected this coming August.

The event is part of **Surveyors Rendezvous 2013**, a large annual gathering of land surveyors, antique-instrument collectors and kindred enthusiasts hosted by **Surveyors Historical Society**. Last year the group rendezvoused along the Missouri River route of **Lewis & Clark**, but this coming summer -- **August 28 to 31, 2013** - the surveying world will rendezvous in and around the **Historic Area of Philadelphia**.

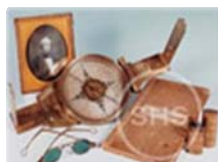
Charles Mason's gravestone isn't the *only* noteworthy event occurring at **Rendezvous 2013**. Leading off the 3-day symposium will be a pilgrimage to one of the most hauntingly historic, but little-known, surveying sites in all America --- Mason & Dixon's **Stargazer's Stone**. This ancient field-stone monument, still standing in remote Chester County after 250 years, is where the pair determined latitude and longitude from the stars, then began measuring **Due South** with 66-foot Gunter's Chains, **15-miles**, to establish today's line between Pennsylvania and Maryland.

Or so legend has always had it. Recent resurveys, done using Mason & Dixon's original field notes and journals, have revealed that their *real Stargazing Spot* was hundreds of feet *south* of the traditional historic stone --- much nearer the house where they stayed that winter (a colonial private home from the **1720s**, still lived in.) The precise *actual position* of Mason & Dixon's **1764 astronomical observatory** has been located, and **Surveyors Rendezvous 2013** will mark its exact point, with a colonial square-head iron spike and a new field-stone monument --- at yet a second ceremony open to the public, planned for the afternoon of **August 29, 2013**.

There will even be a *third* event --- the unveiling of a **Historic Marker** at **South Street** --- the southernmost limit of once-tiny colonial Philadelphia. **Surveyors Historical Society** welcomes *everyone* --- young and old, SHS members or non-members, surveyors and non-surveyors from every walk of life. All are encouraged to participate in these unique historic dedications. Additional information, including **Rendezvous 2013** registration details, will be available soon.

This nation must never forget its storied past. In sweat and mud - and often blood -- our pioneering ancestors *built* this country. Mason & Dixon's monumental boundary survey of **1763-68**, guided almost entirely from the stars, was a scientific *triumph* of colonial times. On the **250th Anniversary** of its starting year, surveyors and stargazers of modern days will celebrate that achievement, by adding *new knowledge* about it -- carved in stone -- to American history.

Everyone is invited to attend the public ceremonies, as well as the many other worthwhile activities of **Surveyors Rendezvous 2013p . . . at Historic Philadelphia on August 28-31, 2013**.



Surveyors Historical Society

By: **Chas Langelan**, SHS vice-chair

(For more information, contact the writer at clangelan@comcast.net or 240-394-0825)